The Industrial Labour Welfare Association Ltd.,
COIMBATORE.

Welcome Address by

Sri K. SUNDARAM,

President of the Chamber,

and

Speeches by

His Excellency

Sri V. V. GIRI,

Governor of Kerala,

Sri G. D. NAIDU,

and

Vote of thanks by

Sri G. R. GOVINDARAJULU NAIDU

at

Laying the Foundation Stone
for the New Building for
The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Coimbatore

on 9th October, 1962 at 11 a. m,

at ILWA Hostel Premises,
Avanashi Road, :: Coimbatore.

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Laying the foundation stone for the new building
by His Excellency Sri V. V. Giri,
Governor of Kerala on Tuesday
the 9th October, 1962 at 11 a. m.

Welcome Address by

Sri K. Sundaram,

President of the Chamber.

Your Excellency Sri V. V. Giri,
distinguished guests and friends,

(Welcome to all)

On behalf of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Coimbatore and on my own behalf I have great pleasure in welcoming you all on this happy occasion of laying the foundation stone for the new building of this Chamber. I deem it a great honour and privilege to extend a cordial welcome to His Excellency, Sri V. V. Giri, Governor of Kerala who has been kind enough to accept our invitation and find time to lay the foundation stone for the new building of the Chamber in the midst of his pressing engagements at Kerala due to the present political situation.

His Excellency needs no introduction. For the benefit of the younger generation I narrate here a few of his achievements. Hailing from Andhra State, he was educated as a Barrister but he is an Indian first and foremost, a friend of the poor and downtrodden although he lives now in Raj Bhavan and is the Governor and Head of Kerala State. Sri Giri was attracted by Gandhian ideals and became a non-co-operator as early as 1921. As a Trade Unionist he worked for the cause of Railway Labour. His masterful advocacy of the cause of Railwaymen brought him many laurels as President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation in 1927 and Joint Secretary 1929–36.

He was a delegate to the International Labour Organization at Geneva in 1927 and the Workers' Representative for the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1932. He was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha. He was Minister for Industries and Labour in Rajaji's and Prakasam's cabinets. After Independence, he was the Indian High Commissioner in Ceylon and he was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952. He was chosen as Union Minister for Labour. Sri Giri, a veteran Congressman, Administrator and Statesman was appointed as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh in 1957 and as the Governor

of Kerala in 1960 where he is trying hard to keep the people together and build up their economy and industry. May the ALMIGHTY GOD shower on him many more years of useful and purposeful life for the service of our country.

OWN BUILDING:

Laying the foundation stone for the new building is a red-letter day in the annals of this Chamber. It is needless for me to detail the necessity for a suitable building for a Chamber like this. Most of the progressive Chambers of Commerce, trade and industrial associations in the country have buildings of their own for housing the Secretariat, holding meetings and discharging other functions which a Chamber is expected to do. The Commercial and Industrial community could safeguard and foster their interests only through well-knit organisations functioning properly. This Chamber has to play an important role in catering to and protecting the interests of its members and also in the further development of this region in general and Coimbatore in particular. In the above context, a suitable building for carrying out the liaison work of the Chamber is an urgent and absolute necessity. Although this Chamber has been founded by that illustrious Statesman, Dr. R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar about

30 years ago it is only after 3 decades of its existence that the Chamber is fulfilling its ambition of having its own building. In this context, I am to express our grateful thanks to Sri V. Palaniswamy Naidu, Chairman, Indian Commercial Bank Ltd., for having given the Chamber office accommodation free of rent throughout the long period of 3 decades. The present strength is over 400 representing all Industrial and Commercial interests. We are thankful to the oldest and founder member, Sri G. D. Naidu for having donated this piece of land for constructing the building but for which it could not have been possible to achieve this. The building is estimated to cost Rs. 1.25 lakh of which we have already collected a sum of Rs. 70,000/- and hope to reach the target before long. Here, I may be permitted to refer to some of our immediate problems on which our attention is to be focussed in the near future.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:

It is admitted that new industries have not developed enough in Madras State or rather in the Southern Region to the same extent as that in Bombay or West Bengal. There has been some development in Bangalore, Madras and Coimbatore but by and large this Southern Region is still backward relatively. The shortage of iron

and coal has been the main reason and it is hoped that the Union Government will allot more liberally iron and coal to the industries in this region. The shortage of transport, fuel and power have cumulatively contributed to that imbalance of industrial development. In order to remove this imbalance more industries should be started in the South by removing all bottlenecks.

HOLDING THE PRICE LINE:

There has been a rise in the price level of agricultural and industrial commodities and it has been suggested in some quarters that the spiralling prices must be clamped down by statutory controls, as voluntary and strategic controls, now existing in the matter of food-grains, clothing, sugar etc., have not helped to arrest the price level. I am of the opinion that only by increasing production the upward trend in prices could be arrested. Distribution is as important as production of goods. There has been always an emphasis on production but no attention has been paid to the distribution. From the recent events it is evident that the Government wants to take over the entire distribution in stages. The entry of the State Trading Corporation in internal trade has resulted in dislocating the distribution machinery. There is every possibility of the distribution of other

essential commodities like iron and steel, clothing, foodgrains etc. being taken over by the State either wholly or partially. The Public Sector is encroaching more and more in the field of Private Sector as we see now that the State is contemplating since given up entering into business from procuring and distributing of foodgrains to the manufacture of contraceptives. The business community is viewed as an unwanted society and is gradually being wiped out of its existence. This unsecured position and frequent threat of nationalisation is driving the community to despondency.

POWER SHORTAGE:

In spite of all the Hydel Power projects in the Southern States, still we are facing shortage of power supply and are not able to meet the industrial demand. The commissioning of Neyveli Thermal station and the expansion of the existing thermal and hydel power projects will not be adequate for the requirments of the growing industries. The suggestions made in the recent conference at Ooty to divide the country into different zones will not be able to meet the demand for power. It is regrettable to note that the Centre has turned down the proposal to generate thermal power by a consortium of industrialists in the private sector. It is rather distressing

that the Government is not prepared to change their policy in the case of the private sector even under these difficult conditions while any number of changes in the policy are being made when it concerns the public sector. Therefore, I would like to suggest that if all the power agencies in this region, private and public, join together and form an inter state grid which will be the first step towards national integration and temporarily solve the power problem to some extent.

TAXATION POLICY:

The Taxation Policy of the Centre and the States has been solely designed for the maximisation of revenues to meet the plan expenditure. Consequently, capital formation has been difficult. Sales Tax is one of the main sources of elastic revenue to the States and no wonder the Sales Tax Policy and administration has been a great hardship to the merchant. The four States in the Southern Region follow different systems with variations in rates, rules, exemptions etc. In Madras, we have a system of single point, multi-point, compounded tax, turnover tax, surcharge, excise duty and penal tax. The other States have made various alterations in their rules although their Sales Tax Acts have been modelled on the Madras Act.

Reform and simplification of this Act is very urgent and absolutely necessary. Andhra Pradesh has appointed Dr. P. S. Lokanathan to enquire and report on Sales Tax reform. The Madras Minister for Commercial Taxes has announced to appoint an expert sometime next year. Kerala has already the benefit of an enquiry and report recently. It is my earnest opinion that instead of appointing such experts periodically and amending the Sales Tax Acts often, it would be desirable if all the States co-operate together and reform the Sales Tax Law so that there may be uniformity. In Madras, there is scope for expanding the list of commodities under single point levy. The rates of both single and multi-point commodities should be brought down. More commodities may be subject to levy of Central Excise in place of Sales Tax which is handi-caping to the business community. According to the Taxation Enquiry Commission any tax over ½% is too high and the present rate of 2% multi-point tax is rather heavy. All these taxation measures, particularly for the most law abiding businessman is only a diversion of energy and waste of time which, otherwise, would normally have been utilised usefully for productive purposes. Justice is becoming expensive day by day just as commodity prices are

increasing. In all these matters, the assault on the merchant community is wholesale and the defence is left to the individual. Hence, all the more it is necessary to have a strong Chamber of Commerce for collective bargaining.

INTER STATE CO-OPERATION:

To bring about real national integration and maximum utilisation of available transport, road transport should be allowed to operate throughout the country without the existing restrictions. The recently inaugurated Aliyar Parambikulam project is an illustrious example for inter state co-operation and I hope His Excellency Sri V. V. Giri, Governor of Kerala will exercise his influence and goodwill in persuading the Kerala Government to come to an agreement with the Madras State for the utilisation of Siruvani waters on which this City depends for its drinking water supply. I am hopeful that Coimbatore will not be allowed to starve any longer without adequate drinking water from Siruvani lest it will arrest the growth and expansion of the city.

May I request you, Sir, to lay the foundation stone for this building.

Thank you all.

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Speech by

His Excellency **Sri V. V. Giri,**

Governor of Kerala.

Mr. Sundaram, President of the Chamber,
Members of the Chamber of Commerce,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I consider it a privilege and honour to have been asked to lay the foundation stone of the Chamber. I am not a stranger to Coimbatore and I think I have laid many stones here. (cheers) Apart from it, not only I dealt with the stones of Coimbatore but the human beings in Coimbatore (laughter) from atleast the year 1937. Almost during the time I was twice a minister of the Government of Madras which was then an integrated state, almost every week I had to come to settle disputes between the Mill owners and the workers and also to look after the interests of the mill-owners who were at that time in a difficult position with their creditors, and Multanees in Bombay and elsewhere. (laughter) In fact I had to give an assurance to the Central Bank and others that I shall not allow them to close the transactions, to close the mills and that I shall be responsible for the safety of their money that they have deposited here for the use of mill-owners.

I therefore claim that I have served the city for many years and therefore, whenever there is an opportunity and whenever there is a call from my esteemed friends, G. D. Naidu and many others, I readily accept their requests because Coimbatore is a live city, the Manchester of Southern India and not only the Manchester of Southern India but to-day the mill-owners have with their enthusiasm are starting other industrial enterprises to the benefit of the people and the country generally.

I therefore welcome the establishment and reorganization on some basis of a Chamber of Commerce and we are grateful to Mr. G. D. Naidu for giving us an opportunity to build such a chamber (applause). It also speaks well that during the last fortnight you could collect 70 thousand rupees and I am sure it will exceed the amount that you expect and most probably you may get even 3 lakhs of rupees. (applause).

After all these Chambers of Commerce must be places not to have really Chambers which don't run a regular office. It must have experts on the Chamber who will be able to deal with facts and figures and the Chamber should be in a position to assist the members in providing necessary information when there are differences

between them and Government and whenever there are differences between mill owners and workers. That expert knowledge the Chamber should possess and be of great help to the mercantile community. I want the mercantile community to be united, to be strong, to be well organized so that people must remember, the Government must remember that it alone could deliver goods on behalf of the members of the Chambers. (applause)

Therefore it is high time that you should see that every merchant, every businessman, every industrialist is a member of the Chamber, ready to give his donations and subscriptions so that the Chamber may be laid on true foundations and this foundation that you are having to-day should be strengthened by the other foundation viz you must have the material to protect your interests i. e., a number of experts dealing on different matters whether be textile, sugar or cement – all these – then alone you will be in a position to make the Government understand that you can put forward reasonable proposals in a reasonable way.

Mr. Sundaram's address was most illuminating and it has raised many important issues. I wish your finance minister or the chief minister were here in

my place and they would have tried to answer some of the most cogent arguments you have put forward. It is a part of the many issues that you have raised. You have raised the issue of the public and private sector, to a great extent I agree. There should not be any difference between the public sector and the private sector. We must be thankful to the private industrialist for having given the push for the starting of industries. I do not like always these people speaking, "the public sector is very good. The private sector is very bad. The private sector has corruption in it. The public sector is wonderful" and all that. It is all wrong. I wish our leaders do not unnecessarily raise the issue of public and private sector except knowing the principles on which the public sector and the private sector should run. Whatever conditions are imposed on public sector, the same conditions can be imposed on private sector. But the public sector also should not have advantages over the private sector and apart from it, we should welcome the private sector in establishing industries for the reason that the Government is always in a position to take those industries whenever they want but at the same time security must be given to private industrialists, when they start industries for how long, for how many

years they can run the industries without lets or hindrance either from Government or from any other source.

So long as that security is given, I as a labour leader, I as a Minister of Labour, I, as a Governor or in any other capacity, these principles must be understood by every body. Every body has a right to protect his interest. The private sector has a right to protect this interest, the public sector, the same thing, the worker the same thing.

We want therefore strong organizations representing as I have always pleaded for the working class, I also plead very strongly, that the bigger and the smaller merchants and industrialists become active members of the chamber so that they have enough information on every issue and whenever an issue rises between Government and themselves between workers and themselves in all the industries they should have facts and figures. Unless you are fortified with information facts and figures, your case will always go by default.

Another point that was raised was about the pausity of industries in the south and I am however certain and I am an optimist so far as the Madras State is concerned – I cannot speak with authority

about other regions – but Madras State will soon show itself in such a way by the organization of these industries and the way they are doing it that the time will come when it may exceed any other, even Bombay or Calcutta, (applause.) because there is a great desire on the part of the industrialists Mill owners in places like Coimbatore not to merely amass wealth and put the money in the banks but for their posterity but they are taking interest in trying to get the new avenues, trying to create employment and they are doing it in such a way – I always admire the way in which we do progress.

For instance, even take the family planning. Tamilians are very calculating. They thought that they would increase only by 11% while in Kerala and others, there is 25 and 30% increase in population. (laughter.)

So, from every point of view the people of the Madras State are intelligent but at the same time I want them to understand that if they want concessions from other states, they must also be prepared to give concessions to them (Cheers) and it cannot be a one way traffic. You want to ask from Kerala for every thing but don't care to think of Kerala yourself. That is the bad thing I told the Madras Government

also, "certainly you are entitled for water to drink and I am trying to do my best, but certain indiscretions are done which prevent the matter progressing very satisfactorily."

I can assure you, I am as much interested in Madras as in Kerala. Of course I am most interested in Kerala and so long as I am Governor of Kerala, I will fight tooth and nail with any other state, Andhra, Madras or anybody trying to get undue advantage from us without giving due advantage to us. (applause.)

So far as the president has referred to the power and I can assure you in the next five years, we shall produce so much power. The Idiki and The Pamba for which we are going to spend about 80 Crores of rupees. We will not only be sufficient but we shall certainly surpass the Madras and even the Mysore State if they so desire. We are trying to hasten the work. The Pamba will be ready in the course of 3 years. Idiki is now beginning and I do hope and trust that it is necessary for the whole southern region to distribute its advantages and disadvantages in such a way that no body should suffer but every body should have the advantage of it. No doubt without power you cannot start industries.

If industries are languishing for instance, take the number of industrial estates, that the Government are building. What is the use of these wretched buildings, if you are not in a position to supply iron, to supply steel, to supply power, many of the industrial estates throughout the length and breadth of India, whether the North, East or South or West, are suffering on account of the fact that they are not able to have material and so the doors are closed. I go to a greater extent and say instead of building big building let us have beautiful sheds where the materials must be found and industrial estates will then progress. Of course if you have money, you can certainly have beautiful buildings but even without money, so long as you are in a position to secure materials for running your industrial estates, in the beginning even sheds are quite sufficient. That is my view of the matter.

So I would like the Private Sector people also not to talk of the public sector, not to say anything against it and then that is the only remedy for making them not to say anything against it. (laughter.) That is the only way. That is the method, the non-violence method of doing things. India is progressing. Big industries are being started but it must be remembered – my friend Mr. G. D. Naidu will agree with

me that these big m o d e r n industries, whether it is automobile, whether it is locomotive, whether it is motor car manufacture, those big industries with most modern equipments require smaller number of men and more machines, machines replacing the man. But we cannot avoid it. We must be self sufficient in the matter of key industries, in the matter of large industries, in all industries but at the same time if you can start ancillary industries which will help the bigger industries – if we can have cottage industries in almost every home wherein they can prepare the small parts of cycles and so forth, you will improve the potentiality for employment which is the real issue that affects the country.

If you can give every home at least one square meal a day, a few clothes to wear and a little hut to live in, I am not talking of palaces and good houses, you have done your part and after that the poorer classes and others can look after themselves.

The president has referred to the Sales Tax and the troubles. I always hear about it wherever I go, whether I go to Palghat, or Cannanore or Calicut, I would like to advise the merchants to be careful I would like them to learn with the assistance of the chamber that they maintain an account

whatever that account be but without account they will give you more trouble. (laughter.) With an account also they give trouble (laughter) but you will be more in an advantageous position.

I therefore think it is high time that the chamber should instruct people to keep their accounts. In fact, the complaint was that the sales tax people trouble people unnecessarily and all that. But my feeling is, if you try to have an account for what you do, it will be better. That is my suggestion. If you do that, your troubles from the sales tax officers will be far less.

I want therefore the country to emphasize the starting of village industries, small scale industries in larger numbers, bigger industries are bound to come with or without collaboration of the foreigners and they must be self sufficient in the matter of our supplies.

There is another thing which our country and Government should take much care of viz. that our exports in our country have suffered, because the samples that you send to the customer abroad will not afterwards tally with the goods you send. That is really the thing that has taken away the prestige, the dignity and the integrity of our export market. I know as

a matter of fact from Allepy or some where people have sent coir to Germany but they have put any amount of sand in each of the bag so that it may weigh heavier and all that they were sent back again.

So also in many cases. The cases may be few but a few cases of this kind will make the foreigner think that we are a set of cheats that we do not stick to our word, that we have no integrity. Once the national integrity and your character suffer, then your interests will suffer.

Therefore I will desire that those who export goods to other countries must be careful to see that the goods sent are even better than the samples that were approved in the first instance. Some of these things you must be careful about and unless our country is organized on a sound basis with the co-operation of all concerns, specially the industrialists, specially the merchants who are the great servers of the community, we shall be no where.

I am very glad therefore that the President of the chamber has referred to many important things and I am very glad the Neyveli project is coming, it might be able to help you to have industries on a large scale. I remember, in the year 1937, when I was a minister in the Rajaji's Government, I was sending a number of

stones, the Neyveli stones to Germany. Rajaji said, "What fool are you? Why are you wasting your time in sending stones?" Then I said, "It may be that I am sending stones now; but it may be worth a million. It may be worth any amount. Almost each stone will be a diamond and you will get the benefit of it and I always said, those who laugh last laugh best and I am very glad the Neyveli scheme which I thought of with the assistance of my Industries Director Mr. Ramakrishna has come into force and it will be of the greatest benefit for the expansion of industries in the South.

I do not wish to take more time because I have to run back to my own place. I started at 8 o'clock after appointing a new minister and then rushed here in about one hour and ten minutes and I attended one of the engagements and coming here now. I must go back to see many other things are done after 2-30 P. M. there.

I thank you once again for the honour you have done me and you can always be assured specially Coimbatore with whom I have the best associations that they can always rely on any humble services that I could render.

I thank you once again for the patient hearing you have given me. (applause.)

Speech by

Sri G. D. Naidu.

நண்பர்களே இப்பொழுது நம் Chamber of Commerce-க்கு ஒரு வெட்ககரமான காரியத்தைச் சொல்லுகின்றேன். அதாவது இவ்வளவு பெரிய வியாபாரிகள், தொழில் நிபுணர்கள், தொழில் சம்பந்தப்பட்டவர்கள் இருந்துகொண்டு, இந்தக் கட்டிடத்திற்காகப் போய் 100, 50, 1000, 5000 என்று கேட்பது மிகவும் வெட்கக் கேடான காரியம். எப்படியோ கொஞ்சம் வாங்கிவிட்டீர்கள். இன்னும் கொஞ்சம் வாங்குங்கள். அதை மூலதனமாக (capital) வைத்துக்கொண்டு இங்கு நடக்கப்போகும் விழாவில் எல்லோரும் சேர்ந்து ஒரே முகமாக — முந்தின பிரசிடெண்டும் இப்பொழுது இருக்கின்ற சேர்மனும், இந்த கிரவுண்ட் லெவல் கட்டிடத்திற்கு ஒருவரும், மேல் கட்டிடத்திற்கு ஒருவரும் பணம் போட்டு கட்ட வேண்டியது என்று கேட்க வேண்டியது. இப்பொழுது வசூல் செய்திருக்கும் தொகையை இந்த வியாபாரிகள் சங்கத்திற்கு (Chamber of Commerce)-க்கு மூலதனமாக (capital) வைத்துக்கொள்ளவேண்டியது.

Vote of thanks by

Sri G. R. Govindarajulu Naidu.

Your Excellency, Friends,

It is my pleasant duty to propose the vote of thanks. As told by His Excellency, we all wish Coimbatore becomes his second home and we always take pleasure and pride in receiving you, Sir, whenever there are occasions for you to spend a couple of days any time here. We are also very grateful to you for having come to this chamber and performed the function of laying the foundation stone.

His Excellency has been telling us that he has come in one hour and ten minutes from Kerala. It is not the speed of the plane that has brought him here but the speed of his heart and soul which he has towards us has brought him. We always wish His Excellency long life and wish many more visits to this city.

The Chamber owes its deep gratitude to Mr. G. D. Naidu. It is only due to his incentive and the pin prick often he has been giving on the members that has made

us sit here now. I wish he should again continue in the same way so that we have the building as early as possible. I am also thankful to the members who have liberally donated to the building fund. I wish under the stewardship of Mr. Sundaram we have a building of our own very soon.

I wish Your Excellency again and thank you and thanks to all the members. (applause.)

Speech by

Sri G. D. Naidu.

He mentioned about the pin pricks (laughter.) Just before this function I made some pin pricks as he has said in his speech. There I withdraw one word. "வெட்கக்கேடானது" That word I withdraw. Instead I put the word "வெட்ககரமானது"

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